



Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Office of Traffic Safety

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Nevada Department of Public Safety Urges Parents to Use Booster Seats

Nevada joins national campaign to remind parents to use booster seats for children under 4 feet 9 inches

Carson City, NV~ The Nevada Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety is joining with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Ad Council and other local traffic safety advocates to commemorate "Child Passenger Safety Week." Kicking off February 13-19th, the campaign goal is to remind all parents and other adults responsible for transporting older children that if the kids are under 4'9" tall, they need to ride in a booster seat.

In Nevada, five children age 4-8 were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2004. Only 2 of the 5 were restrained in any way; none of them were in a booster seat. Nevada Highway Patrol reports that out of 1,238 collisions involving children age 0 – 8 in that year, 163 children were injured. Of the 4-8 year-olds who died in fatal crashes in Nevada in the last five years, only 4 of the 26 child occupants were restrained in any way (seat belt or otherwise). Nevada law, NRS 484.474, requires children under the age of 6 and under 60 pounds to ride properly in an appropriate child seat, including booster seats.

The UMC Trauma Center in Las Vegas reports that they treated thirty-two children in 2004 that were under the age of six from injuries sustained in a car crash. Of these, 15 were not restrained at all; their medical costs averaged \$66,000. Of the others who were restrained, their average cost was \$26,893. None of the restrained children were riding in a booster seat. For the eighteen children age 6 to 8 that were seen by UMC from car crashes, eight of these were unrestrained. Their average medical cost was \$75,325, compared to \$23,128 for the children who were buckled in.

According to a study by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, children ages 4-8 who use booster seats are 59% less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt. Nationally, only an estimated 10% to 20% of children ages 4-8 currently use booster seats.

DPS Office of Traffic Safety Chief Chuck Abbott says many parents are under the false impression that children who have outgrown child safety seats can move right into regular safety belts. "Nothing could be further from the truth," said Abbott. "Safety belts are made to protect an adult who is at least 4'9" tall. Kids who have outgrown their toddler seat are still not tall enough for the belt to lay on the strong parts of their body, such as hip bones, rather than vulnerable parts like their stomach. If they are less than 4'9" tall, put them in a booster seat."

For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers should remember and follow the “**4 Steps for Kids:**”

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds.
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age one and 20 pounds to about age four and 40 pounds.
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age four to at least age eight—unless the child is 4’9” or taller.
4. Use safety belts in the back seat at age eight or older or taller than 4’9”.

Child Passenger Safety Week continues through February 19th. For more information about the campaign and the proper use of booster seats, go to www.boosterseat.gov. For more information about child passenger seat training, booster seat information or child seat check events in Nevada communities, contact Traci Pearl at the Department of Public Safety’s Office of Traffic Safety at 775-684-7476 or visit www.ots.state.nv.us/cps.

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